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Climate

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Though climates detrimental to human occupance may be modified by man's technology, the economic use of any area is greatly influenced by prevailing climatic conditions. In Negros the average farmer's freedom in agricultural activities dependent on the climate is restricted because of meager technology and equipment. His selection from the alternatives that his land offers is limited severely by inability to emancipate himself from minor caprices of the climate. One crop failure due to inadequate or maldistributed rainfall may mean hunger or borrowing against the next harvest and possibly a debt for life. [731]

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In Caticugan the tempo of many activities is closely adjusted with climatic variations. The transition, for example, from the dry to the wet season starts a series of changes in the lives of the barriofolk, and affects such activities as agriculture, fishing, house repair, food gathering, diet, transportation, and health. The day before the first heavy rains, Caticugan had the silent appearance of a deserted village with plows abandoned on their sides in the fields. The next day the rains came. In the drizzle which followed the downpour the fields suddenly came alive with men plowing the wet earth and women and children planting corn. Irregularity in climatic phenomena often results in disruption of the work cycle and economic patterns of the community.

period Asia cools more rapidly than the surrounding seas, creating high pressure centers over the continent. Due to these high pressure centers there is a general outflowing air movement that is deflected clockwise direction, arriving in the Philippines as the northeast monsoon. 132

During the period of the northeast monsoon abundant precipitation falls on Negros' north and northeastern coasts while the south and southwestern coastal areas are relatively dry. Cebu "milks" much of the moisture of the northeast monsoon before it reaches Negros making it less productive of precipitation than the southwest monsoon. It is during the northeast monsoon's period that the fish corrals of Siaton are built. [221]

The total rainfall map (Plate VII)[1] illustrates the annual distribution of precipitation in Negros. The island's eastern coast is the driest because of the less humid northeast monsoon, the proximity of Cebu Island and the Central Mountain range. The heaviest rainfall occurs on the slopes of this range and in parts of southern and west-central Negros. Though Siaton municipality receives nearly 95 inches of precipitation annually, the uneven distribution of this seemingly adequate moisture during the critical agricultural period sometimes results in partial crop failures or necessitates extensive replanting of many cornfields. [731]

1 [See p. 50, cat. 132 -- Analyst]

Another source of precipitation for Negros is the typhoon or baguio. Casimiro del Rosario, Director of the Weather Bureau, in Manila, reports that:

> On the average, about nine tropical cyclones of varying intensity (from depression to typhoon strength) pass over the Philippines per year. For the post-war years, thirteen such tropical cyclones occurred in 1948, eleven in 1949, five in 1950, and nine in 1951.[26]

Whereas the trajectories of these tropical cyclones are usually north of the island, some pass near or over parts of Negros, bringing several days of heavy winds and rain, often causing serious destruction. In December, 1951, Typhoon "Amy" (typhoons are given feminine names by the Weather Bureau) struck parts of eastern Negros Occidental, killing 49 persons and destroying about 20 per cent of the sugar cane. Little damage was done in southern Negros Oriental. In 1952 another typhoon passed near southern Negros but the planted fields were not damaged.

Convectional rains frequently occur during the period of the southwest monsoon in the upper reaches of the Siaton River valley. A number of times during my residence the sky above this locality would darken malignantly. Soon a misty grey curtain of rain would slowly move down the valley toward the sea. Often, however, by the time the rain reached Caticugan it was only "big-drop"

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[26] Casimiro del Rosario. A letter in "Question and Answer" column, Philippines Free Press, XLII, No. 30 (September 27, 1952), p.44. In 1934 there were 17 typhoons which struck the Philippines, the greatest number of typhoons recorded for one year in the Philippines.

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During the office of Capitan Tondoy (1797-1798) a fierce baguio (typhoon) raged over southern Negros for three days. 175+ 731.

> If the bananas were not broken, they were uprooted. The Siaton river overflowed its banks. After the third day, when the waters subsided, the branch of the Siaton river dried up and its waters mingled with the main river at Pangligiran hill. (See Plate XIX.)[1]

A swampy area was created along the coast where the branch of the river once flowed, a region which exists today, planted with nipa palms. Now it was impossible for boats to ascend the Siaton River to dock near the present site of the Catholic church as they had done in the past.

In 1797 or 1798 the people moved from Olambid southward near the present Sitio Nawakat. (See Plate XX.)[2] The only reason given for this move in the Cadiane manuscript was that the new location was more advantageous because it was elevated and the people could see if the Moros landed at the beach. Another Moro raid was made during the office of Capitan Pinando (nicknamed "Kilikot"), 1801-02.[38] The Moros landed near the base of Pangligiran hill which is located on the west bank of the Siaton River where it is now bridged by the National Road. In 1817 the people agreed to move from their present location to Mangudkod, now Sitio Ilongsoran. 175+ 166

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[38] Many of the names listed by Cadiane during this period are nicknames. The custom of giving a person a nickname is widespread in the Philippines today. For an interesting discussion of this practice see G. T. Ortiz, "Amusing Nicknames," Philippines Free Press, XLIV, No. 15 (April 11, 1953), p. 43.

1 [See p. 156, cat. 116 Analyst]

2 [See p. 157, cat. 116 -- Analyst]

While Siaton was an independent parish, including Dauin, the priest still lived in Dauin due to the danger of Moro raids in Siaton. 175*

The first tributes were collected in 1817 from the people of Mangudkod. Individuals over eighteen years had to pay twenty centavos (ten cents) to the government. The tribute (or tributo) was established during Legaspi's day and was a kind of head tax paid to Spain. The tribute was payable in money or kind to the encomenderos.[40] 175* 657

In 1817 or 1818 an earthquake occurred in southern Negros "which lasted for nearly three months", i.e., the after-shocks. 175* 731 252

> The earth was always moving, so the people had difficulties in cooking their food. They had to build a big fire and hang their pots over it. Or they cut one bamboo node, put rice inside, added water, and corked the end. They threw this node into the fire and when the bamboo was charred, the rice was cooked.

This was one of the many earthquakes which shook this region; some caused serious destruction.

During the office of Capitan Etib (1817-1818) the group decided to send a small colony from Mangudkod to begin a settlement which is today Barrio Bonbonon. Bonbonon is situated near the bluff of the southern 175* 166

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[40] The payment made in Siaton, according to Cadiane, was not that common in the Philippines. At first the tributo was eight reales (about fifteen centavos), raised to ten in 1602 and twelve reales in 1851. Zaide, The Philippine Since Pre-Spanish Times, p. 171.

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

175* 539

During the office of Capitan Juan Jarnaes, nicknamed Bakwog ("Crooked"), 1837-38, three men, Adin, Ontod, and Indo, became famous in the region for protecting Siaton poblacion from Moro raids. The folklore reported by Gadiane said each man had unique supernatural abilities but each had a chicken-like spur growing from the heel of one foot. When this spur became bloody it was an omen of a pending Moro raid. Indo was so eager to fight the Moros that he used his willing wife as a decoy.

> One time Indo let his wife go to the beach to gather shells while he hid in the nearby bushes. Soon a Moro boat passed by and the Moros saw Indo's wife gathering sea shells. The Moros landed and grabbed the woman, dragging her toward their boats. Indo rushed from his hiding place, carrying his bolo and shield. Running toward the Moros, and using his shield as a spade, he threw sand into the Moros' eyes, temporarily blinding them. Then he struck them with his bolo, right and left, killing many of them. He left only two to escape. When Indo and his wife left the beach, the two Moros returned, gathered their dead companions, and took them away in their boats.

175* 731

During Capitan Dalokdok Kinkito's office (1839-40) a rain of ashes descended on Siaton. No reference could be found to the eruption of Canlaon volcano during these years, although eruptions occurred in 1733, 1736, 1883, and 1902.[49] However, the ashes could have come from volcanoes erupting in Mindanao or Camiguin Island.

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[49] Marco, op. cit., pp. 46-8.

Bisay as Pagans OAll
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CB 175* 161

is the more accurate; the writer is inclined to accept the more detailed estimate of Buzeta and Bravo. Even the larger population estimate would have meant that in 1850 Negros had a population density of only twelve persons per square mile. By 1850 six Recollect fathers and eleven curas insulares (Filipino lay assistants) lived in Negros.

CB 175* 731●

In 1851 Basilio Kirit, nicknamed Bararo, was elected capitan and some roads were built in the poblacion. In 1861 a severe cholera epidemic hit Siaton and killed many of the inhabitants. Marco gives a vivid account of this epidemic that swept Negros.[54] It appears to have been introduced to Negros from Panay and later spread throughout the archipelago.[55]

The Non-Christians of Siaton

CB 563

BP 131 161 142 437 484

During the Spanish period there were an estimated 300 Negritos (or Atas) living in the mountains near Siaton. The last Negrito group to visit the poblacion was in the 1930's who told the people originally they had come from Panay (Antique province). Informants in Siaton are still living who remember the Negritos and reported that "they were not very black but we could tell they were Atas by their hair." The Negritos came to the lowlands to barter medicinal roots, honey, rattan, and similar items, for rice corn and clothing

[54]Marco, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

[55]Frederic H. Sawyer, The Inhabitants of the Philippines. London, Marston S. Low, 1900, p. 398.

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The Siaton cabezas often had trouble collecting their taxes; some people would flee to the hills when they came to collect. The cabeza had to find them or pay their taxes from his own pocket. Zaide writes:

> If the collection fell short of the amount due to the government owing to the inability of some barriofolk to pay, or because of their death, he had to reimburse the shortage out of his own pocket. Evidently, he paid a high price for the honor of being a cabeza de barangay. Notwithstanding the financial sacrifice many Filipinos aspired to the office of cabezaship because a cabeza enjoyed a high political and social position in the pueblos, next only to the gobernadorcillo.[83]

In Siaton, however, there were individuals who did not wish to be a cabeza. Such uncooperative persons were whipped or jailed by the Spaniards. While the promise of a higher social position, a certain financial reward, and perhaps later a capitanship were important reasons why many desired to be a cabeza, coercion or actual force often made some men accept the office. It was from barriofolk who fled to the hills to avoid paying taxes and from discontented cabezas that a considerable number of the followers of the outlaw bands in southern Negros were recruited.

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In 1872 Father Cabriada returned to Siaton as its parish priest and three or four years later (1875-1876) another typhoon swept over southern Negros, causing

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[83] Zaide, The Philippines Since the British Invasion, p. 162; Le Roy, The Americans in the Philippines, I, pp. 42-3.

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widespread damage and destroying the poblacion stone church. In 1877 Lucas Ege was re-elected capitan.[84] It is obvious that the Eges were a prominent family in the poblacion. Lucas or Francisco Ege were capitans for ten out of a seventeen-year period. In 1877 Lucas Ege began the reconstruction of the stone church. This church was damaged by an earthquake in 1897 and largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1925.

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In 1879 Telesforo Tayko was elected capitan; his political career culminated in his election as a congressman to the national government in Manila during the American period.[85] This is the first mention of the Tayko family which has been active until this day in community affairs, often dominating the political life of the locality.

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In 1887, when Telesforo Tayko was re-elected capitan, a Spanish commissioner, Manuel Bugarin, arrived in Siaton. This year is called pongkol (cut) by Cadiane because of the graft of Bugarin in collecting the taxes.

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[84] With the end of Lucas Ege's term as capitan, he was followed by Antonio Gabriel, nicknamed "Kibotkibot" (probably the same person as Gabriel Kibotkibot, 1861-62); Francisco Ege, who served two consecutive terms (1863-66); Angel Gajonera, nicknamed "Andres" (1867-68); Damasao Ragudo (1869-70); Mariano Galabay, nicknamed "Baho" (1871-72); Francisco Ege, his third term (1873-74); Rosindo Kinamot, nicknamed "Balangka," re-elected (1875-76); and Lucas Ege, second term (1877-78).

[85] After Tayko's election as capitan in 1879 he was followed in office by Andres Ege (1881-82); Damasao Ragudo (1883-84); Angel Gajonera (1885-86); and Telesforo Tayko was re-elected in 1887. In 1889-90 Lucas Ege became capitan for the third time.

of many prominent Filipino leaders. This incident led to the famous "Cry of Balinatawak" when Bonifacio tore up his cédula receipt as a symbol of defiance to the Spanish government. The first real battle between Filipino and Spanish troops occurred at San Juan del Monte (Luzon) August 30, 1896. In September the revolt broke out in Panay and in November in Negros. The commandant of the Siaton Guardia Civil, Torres, was promoted to lieutenant colonel and ordered to go to Lanao, Mindanao. The Spanish lieutenant who replaced Torres was a heavy drinker and two months later was replaced by Lt. Tomas Arnaez, a Spanish officer who had married the daughter of the capitan of Bais. The treatment of the inhabitants in the poblacion by the Guardia Civil improved; Gadiane speculates: "Maybe it was because the wife of Arnaez was a Filipina."

In 1897 a severe earthquake followed by large waves rocked the Siaton area. The poblacion church was destroyed and from giant rents in the earth there issued sand and mud with the odor of gumpowder. It is almost certain that this earthquake mentioned by Gadiane was the great earthquake of September 21, 1897, in the Sea of Jolo. The shores of Zamboanga and Basilan Island were pounded by giant waves that inundated many villages.

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

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"Extraordinary sea movements were noticed all along the southwestern coast of Negros..."[116]

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This year Lt. Arnaez was transferred to Manila and another Spanish officer, with a family of thirteen children, arrived in Siaton. The children's attitude toward the Filipinos is described by Gadiane.

> The sons [of the lieutenant] could do anything they wished. Many of the people had swollen faces from blows received from these sons. Many would have their bodies badly bruised because one of the sons beat them for refusing to give them what they wanted. The sons were proud and cruel. They got anything from the people without payment...During these times we suffered boxings, beatings with a gun, and had our elbows tied together because we refused to give them things we possessed.

Their father, however, did punish the sons, by confining them in the barracks where the soldiers lived. The new lieutenant also became involved in a feud with the parish priest, the "local tyrant" as Gadiane describes him.

The Philippine Revolution Against the United States

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Various attempts, all unsuccessful, were made by the Spanish to halt the mounting tide of revolution in the Philippines. The United States became involved in both the Cuban and Philippine rebellions; this resulted in the Spanish-American war. Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay May 1, 1898. The same day, probably

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[116] Saderro Maso, S.J., "Volcanoes and Seismic Centers," Census of the Philippines, 1903, I, pp. 217-8. During the same year the volcano Catarman on Camiguin Island became active. Maso writes: "Probably some of the feeble shocks felt at Cebu, Negros and Iloilo were connected...with this volcanic center."

smouldering feud between the Tayko and Gadiane groups. 175*
Presidente Santiago Tayko was given permission to be ab- 653
sent from his position for four months in order to attend 661
to personal business. During this period the municipal council, under the probing eye of Councilor Gadiane, discovered that $5,000 had been set aside in the municipal treasury for the construction of the school. The *municipio* had burned and Felipe's father's house had been rented for eighty-five dollars a month to furnish space for the *presidente*, justice of the peace, treasurer, chief of police, classrooms, and the jail. The funds set aside for the school building had been used to pay the rent; the original amount set aside for the school building had dwindled to less than $2,000.

The municipal council passed a resolution requesting Congressman Tayko to obtain funds from the national government to build a new school. Gadiane later received a letter from Tayko, stating he had received the resolution and requesting Gadiane to stop making trouble. Several months after this incident Tayko returned to Siaton for the municipal elections. His nephew, Fidel Tayko, was a candidate for *presidente* of the municipality. Just before the election lumber arrived in the *poblacion* for the new school. Fidel won the election.

On the fifth day of the fifth month at five o'clock 175*
in the evening, 1925, a severe earthquake shook Siaton. 731
The *Flores de Mayo* procession was just leaving the church when a series of violent shocks occurred. Thick smoke

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and ashes filled the air. Large waves were formed at sea but when they reached the shore they were small and did no damage.

Fearing a tidal wave, the people streamed to the hills where they sang hymns and prayed for deliverance. In one locality twenty-five persons were buried alive by a landslide and the Siaton church and convento were badly damaged. One of the tributaries of the Siaton River near Balanan was blocked by earth slides and Lake Linao was created. The Mantuyop River was temporarily dammed by a slide and its bed near Naga remained dry for several hours. This earthquake also closed some of the hillside springs in Barrio Caticugan.

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A new messianic prophet appeared in Panay during this period. Florencio Intrencherado claimed to be in communication with a spiritual guide and threatened the people with flood, earthquake and fire unless they overthrew the American government and made him their emperor. The eruption of Canlaon volcano, the 1925 Negros earthquake and the earthquake disaster in Japan gave Intrencherado tremendous prestige in both Panay and Negros. In 1926 his followers were said to number more than twenty-six thousand. In May, of the same year, some three hundred adherents of Intrencherado attacked the municipio at Victorias. They were defeated by the local police. Intrencherado was arrested in Jaro (Iloilo province), declared insane, and later confined in a Manila hospital.

Inalad, Bonbonon, Giliga-on and Bonawon. A new concrete bridge was built over the Canaway River; this improved the transportation facilities during the rainy season. 175* 653 494

In 1935 the Philippine Commonwealth was established. No elections were held this year for municipal officers; their terms were merely extended for an additional two years.[165] During this period the water system of Siaton was installed. The national, provincial, and municipal governments each contributed $5,000 for the construction of the new water system. A concrete reservoir was built at Sitio Talio, west of Naga, and the water brought to the poblacion by gravity. The water was piped only to the residences of the more prominent people of the poblacion. Public faucets were also installed at the plaza and a few other places. The system is inadequate for during the dry season the pressure becomes so low that the water runs only for short periods during the day. 175* 653 365 565

In October 1937 clouds of locusts came to Siaton. The insects covered the plaza and climbed into the church, houses, and stores. Nearly all of the unharvested rice was destroyed. In the same year Fidel Tayko was re-elected as Siaton's mayor, the new name substituted for presidente. His defeated opponent protested the election as fraudulent and won his case in Dumaguete. The victor became mayor 175* 731 ● 175* 666

165"The first elections under the Commonwealth were held December, 14, 1938, for local offices." Tolentino and Zaide, op. cit., p. 151.

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines OA1 576
Central Bisayas OA14

P-CB 226

These two types of fish corrals, Leyte and Binatural, are found in Tanjay. (See Plate XLII.)[1] The Leyte fish corral is quite similar to the Siaton bonsod; the former is said to have been introduced to Tanjay by Leyte fishermen. The Leyte fish corral is built in depths thirty to sixty-five feet deep; whereas the Binatural is constructed in shallow waters; as a result the Binatural catches smaller fish. Two similar types of fish corrals are built in Siaton, the large bonsod, similar to the Quinavite and Leyte, and the smaller, shallow-water pahubas that resembles the Binatural and Natural. Siaton pahubas have a small trap, like the bobo, at the exit of the last section of the corral. (See Plate XLIII.)[2]

CB 221 731 228

Fish corral and bobo activities in Siaton are keyed to the monsoons. The southwest monsoon brings winds and rough seas that destroy the bonsods and make it difficult to lay or retrieve the bobo. Each year the bonsods are rebuilt and each year the southwest monsoon wrecks them, usually in July or August. Sometimes a typhoon sweeps across southern Negros, as in 1951 and 1952, destroying the bonsods earlier than usual. In 1951 all Siaton bonsods except one were destroyed by an early May typhoon; in 1952 the fish corrals were ruined by an early June typhoon. For this reason pelagic fish are less plentiful in Siaton during most of the rainy season.

1 [See p.575, cat. 226 -- Analyst]

2 [See p.575A, cat. 226 -- Analyst]

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In Tanjay fish corrals are built in March and April and last until the northeast monsoon in November. In October, 1950, the fish corrals in this area were destroyed by early northeast winds. Sometimes, the people said, fish corrals are damaged even earlier by an east wind that they call timog.

The northeast monsoon destroys most of the fish corrals along Negros' eastern coast and fish supplies move from southern Negros to Dumaguete; during the southwest monsoon this situation is reversed. Little fresh fish, however, is brought to Siaton from Dumaguete for sale during the rainy season.

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Older informants in Siaton said that once the most common type of fish corral was the Binatural; today's bonsod did not exist. A Binatural was built off Barrio Mantuyop in 1950 but, for the most part, this type is no longer used in Siaton. The fish catch, in the Binatural, was driven into the "last pocket" or section where it was scooped out with small hand nets (salok). One informant explained this type of fish corral "was very expensive to build and hard to catch the fish inside." This may partially explain why the Binatural is rarely built.

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Siaton municipality's coastline is divided into three zones according to the abundance of fish normally caught in bonsods. The first class bonsod zone is from the Zamboanguita-Siaton municipality boundaries to Barrio Sumalaring "in front of the residence of Mr. ——— and the pandan tree." This zone is a most desirable location because

When fish corrals are partially destroyed, early in the season, some owners make temporary repairs. Damaged or destroyed banatas, for example, are replaced with coconut fronds. Early destruction or an unprofitable season is harder on the bonsod workers who depend largely on the fish corral for their meat and cash income; many have no land to cultivate. The price of fish is higher when the fish corrals are destroyed or suffer a poor season. Most fresh fish sold in Negros Oriental is obtained from fish corrals.

228 472 [131] [435]

Types of Fish Caught in Fish Corrals

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Pelagic fish caught most commonly in fish corrals are the "floating" or "surface" species. Umali writes that herring, mackerel, bageye, round scad and bonito are the migratory species frequently caught in fish corrals and other marine fish traps in the Philippines.[60] In Siaton mackerel is said to be most abundant in April and May, herring in January and February, runner (Elagatis bipinnulatus) from February to May, anchovy from February to March and sardine from December to February. Considerable tuna are caught in the bonsods, particularly the yellowfin and striped varieties.[61] Table XXIV[1] gives additional data on the frequency of catches in Siaton fish corrals.

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[60] Umali, op. cit., p. 180.

[61] Herbert E. Warfel, Outlook for Development of a Tuna Industry in the Philippines, Research Report 28. Washington, D.C., United States Department of Interior, Government Printing Office, 1950. This publication contains a map showing the distribution of the yellowfin and striped tunas in the Philippines.

1 [See p. 644, cat. 228 -- Analyst]